

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN, SOPN, PROP, CSCE, UR, US
SUBJECT: WHITNEY/PIPER SLANDER CASE: SOVIET PRESS REACTIO

REF: (A) MOSCOW 16802, (B) MOSCOW 16762

1. JULY 19 MORNING EDITIONS OF PRAVDA AND KOMSOMOL'SKAYA
PRAVDA (AND WE PRESUME OTHER PAPERS AS WELL) CARRY
PROMINENTLY-FEATURED TASS ITEM ON WHITNEY/PIPER TRIAL.
SAME ITEM WAS CARRIED IN FULL ON TASS ENGLISH LANGUAGE
WIRE EVENING OF JULY 18 AND WE PRESUME DEPARTMENT HAS
TEXT.

2. REPEATING EARLIER SOVIET PRESS PLAY WHICH IN EFFECT
DETERMINED CORRESPONDENTS' "GUILT" LONG BEFORE TRIAL TOOK
PLACE, TASS ARTICLE NOTES IN SECOND PARAGRAPH THAT "AS
WAS REPORTED EARLIER, H. PIPER AND C. WHITNEY, IN
ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE AFOREMENTIONED NEWSPAPERS
(I.E. THE TIMES AND SUN), COMMITTED CRUDE SLANDER AGAINST
GOSTELERADIO." (COMMENT: THIS PRESUMABLY OBVIATES NEED
FOR CASUAL READER TO PLOW ON TO PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH TO
LEARN THE JUDGE'S RULING.) TASS ITEM ALSO REPEATS UN-
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FORTUNATE MISCONCEPTION WHICH WE HAVE EVEN SEEN IN SOME
AMERICAN ACCOUNTS, NAMELY THAT "THE JOURNALISTS ...
ASSERTED THAT GAMSAKHURDIA MADE NO SUCH STATEMENTS FOR
TELEVISION." CORRESPONDENTS, OF COURSE, ASSERTED
NOTHING - RATHER, THEY CITED UNOFFICIAL SOVIET SOURCES WH
DOUBTED VALIDITY OF GAMSAKHURDIA'S "CONFESSION".

3. EVENING TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAM "VREMYA" (WHICH ALSO WAS PLAINTIFF IN COURT SUIT) CARRIED FILM REPORT ON TRIAL JULY 18. GMSAKHURDIA AND HIS "CONFESSION" WERE SHOWN AND CAMERA FOCUSED ON TWO EMPTY SEATS PRESUMABLY RESERVED FOR PIPER AND WHITNEY.

4. COMMENT: PROMINENCE GIVEN TO CASE IN PRAVDA AND KOMSOMOL'SKAYA PRAVDA AND ON TV (WHICH RARELY SHOWS FOOTAGE OF COURT CASES) IS APPARENT INDICATION OF SOVIET DECISION TO MILK WHITNEY/PIPER CASE FOR EVERY DROP OF PROPAGANDA VALUE. INSTEAD OF MAKING WHAT WE PRESUME THEY FEEL IS THEIR POINT IN QUASI-LEGAL AND BUSINESSLIKE WAY, SOVIETS ARE GIVING CREDENCE TO VIEW THAT SUIT AGAINST WHITNEY AND PIPER WAS INITIATED CHIEFLY OR SOLELY TO CREATE AN EXCUSE FOR TUB-THUMPING. MATLOCK

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